DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 031 988 FL 001 444

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Laboratory Work in College German.

American Association of Teachers of German.
Spons Agency-National Carl Schurz Association, Inc., Philadelphia, Pa.
Pub Date 68
Note-10p.
Journal Cit-Die Unterrichtspraxis; v1 n2 p15-25 Fall 1968
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.60
Descriptors-Articulation (Program), Audiolingual Methods, Audiovisual Aids, *College Language Programs, *Electronic Classroom Use, Evaluation, *German, Instructional Materials, Language Instruction, *Language Laboratories, *Language Laboratory Use, Tape Recordings

Suggestions are made for the use of the language laboratory in beginning, intermediate, and advanced college German classes. Tape selection, learning goals, integration of tapes with text, laboratory techniques, audiovisual materials, articulation, and the need for laboratory work on different levels are discussed. Certain materials are recommended and an argument is advanced for the electronic classroom as an effective and financially practical alternative to the language laboratory. (AF)

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ED031988

From: Die Unterrichtspraxis, Volume I, Number 2, Fall 1968

LABORATORY WORK IN COLLEGE GERMAN

FRANK D. HORVAY

In this paper I am concerned with the present and the foreseeable future use of the language laboratory on the college level. My definition of a language laboratory includes the electronic classroom, outside-of-class practice centers, and installations servicing individual study positions either on campus or away from it. A combination of practice centers and library-type practice positions is gaining acceptance. As early as in 1962, at Illinois State University at Normal we laid plans for one laboratory for "lock-step" type classroom use and another one for individual use. On some of the larger campuses today individual library-type study positions are available at locations convenient for the students, for example, in the library and in the dormitories. However, the widespread use of these, by means of the Dial-Access Information Retrieval System or the Multiple Audio Distribution System, will be limited for some time. Smaller institutions, especially the liberal arts colleges, cannot afford these systems yet because of their high cost. Recent experiments, such as the one at the University of Illinois in conjunction with the Illinois Bell Telephone Company, have done away with the campus altogether as the scene of language laboratory work. By dialing a certain number on any outside phone one can listen to the desired tape.[1]

It is a sad reflection on our times that the technical achievements in connection with laboratory machinery have outdistanced the contents of the tapes. Let us for a minute consider the familiar dual-track tape recorder; a rather standard item in the present laboratories. Is the cost of these machines, an estimated $9,000 for a thirty-booth laboratory, justified? Nearly all of the present laboratories are overloaded, and the students have barely time to listen and audio-actively respond. In nearly all laboratories I know of, there is simply no time to replay the master tape along with the students' responses and the tape recorders are insufficiently utilized. Aside from this, the educational value of listening to one's own mistakes in intonation and pronunciation is being questioned. At least two recent studies conclude that the record-playback feature, so fervently recommended by the makers of electronic gear, does not enhance the student's knowledge of a foreign language to any measurable degree.[2] We, the teachers, must be wary of unnecessary machinery and desire only that which is needed to accomplish the task. But what is the

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[1] Edwin Jahiel, "A New Development in Laboratory Practice: F. L. by Telephone," report to MLA Conference 10: Audio-Visual Materials and Teacher Training (December 1966), 4 pp. (on stencil).

[2] Jerald R. Green, "Language Laboratory Research: A Critique," *The Modern Language Journal*, XLIX (October 1965), p. 369; Klaus A. Mueller and William Wiersma, "The Effects of Language Laboratory Type Upon Foreign Language Achievement Scores," *MLJ*, LI (October 1967), p. 351.

task? Let me answer this question, perhaps in a hope of stimulating discussion among German teachers as we are trying to redefine our goals.

I. *Beginning College German*

With George A. C. Scherer I shall assume that "the taped laboratory materials are perfectly correlated with the classroom teaching materials"[3] and "it is not possible to make effective use of a language laboratory unless the audio-lingual approach is used in the classroom" (p. 342). If we accept this as a premise, we must once again ask ourselves what are our goals on the Beginning Level, in Intermediate German, and to what extent can laboratory work assist us in the teaching of the advanced courses?

In Beginning German we must now accept the fact that texts are no longer published in the United States without tapes. According to the premise above, whoever omits the tapes or neglects them in his instruction places the students at a disadvantage. Realistically, however, we must learn to distinguish between the wide spectrum of audio-lingual texts and the more traditional texts, which in recent years have added on pattern drills and tapes and call themselves "middle-of-the-road." A case in point is Erika Meyer's *Elementary German* (Second Edition, Houghton Mifflin, 1965), where the tapes have no relation to the individual chapters except in so far as they support the tacked-on pattern drills. Meyer's text is still what it always was: a good grammar, but it has not benefited, even in the new edition, from linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical developments in recent years. In order to find the material which best fits the needs of the students and personality of the teacher, the latter must ask himself the following:

1. Are my goals listening comprehension and speaking, or primarily reading? Before giving a definite answer, such a teacher should be aware of the claim of modern methodology, namely that placing initially the main emphasis on the former does not in any way inhibit the student from developing his reading and writing skill. On the contrary, it accelerates it. A correlative claim is that "time spent in the laboratory contributes to conventional learnings as well as to listening and speaking skills."[4]

2. Is the material I am considering modern? Is there a text, a workbook, and a reader? Are the tapes thoroughly integrated with the text?

[3] "The Use and Misuse of Language Laboratories," *The German Quarterly*, XXXVIII (May 1965), p. 335.

[4] Sarah W. Lorge, "Language Laboratory Research Studies in New York City High Schools: A Discussion of the Program and the Findings," *MLJ*, XLVIII (November 1964), p. 419.

Do they contain, in addition to pattern drills, dialogues, questions, passages read by several native speakers?

3. How is the vocabulary presented in the text? Inductively, occasionally on margins or footnotes, or traditionally in columns in German and in English?

4. Is grammar presented in its entirety, including all the tenses and cases, all the rules and exceptions to the rules? Or, as many teachers now prefer it, first inductively through patterns and other devices, and only later, as a reinforcement, in essential quantities conventionally?

5. How and in what order are the fundamental skills—listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing—taught? Does the material adhere to the demands of modern methodology as summarized by Nelson Brooks?

> The learner . . . is to hear only authentic foreign speech, he is to hear much more than he speaks, he is to speak only on the basis of what he has heard, he is to read only what has been spoken, he is to write only what he has read, and he is to analyze . . . only what he has heard, spoken, read, written, and learned.[5]

6. Are the tapes technically acceptable? Are they helpful, especially if one is not a native German speaker, in regard to phonology and intonation?

7. To what extent does the material (text, workbook, reader, and tapes) impart German cultural anthropology? When a breakfast is discussed, for example, is it a typically German *Frühstück* or American fare? How are greetings handled? In the American way or with an utterance and a handshake? I was puzzled to read in the preface to an otherwise quite acceptable modern text: "By employing an American setting for the stories that comprise the reading texts of the lessons, we have brought the situation and vocabulary close to the life of the students, although we have deprived them of the smattering of information which they might have obtained from simple texts about Germany."[6] Do the pretty pictures with which the publishers so generously endow the modern texts really teach our students something about the Germans and Germany? Or are they merely there to promote sales?

8. At what point and how is literature introduced in the educational material? Perhaps I am in the minority, but I do believe that on the col-

[5] *Language and Language Learning*, Second Edition, (Harcourt, Brace & World 1964), p. 52.

[6] W. P. Lehmann, Helmut Rehder, and George Schulz-Behrend, *Active German, Revised*, (Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1962), p. v.

lege level we should introduce literature early in digestible quantities in the form of proverbs, fables, anecdotes, and poems. I prefer using ungraded material, such as Eberhard Reichmann and Donald H. Crosby, *Der Dichter Spricht* (Ginn, 1962), or Frank G. Ryder and E. Allen McCormick, *Lebendige Literatur* (Houghton Mifflin, 1962), as soon as the beginning students are ready for it.

After considerable fumbling and experimenting with laboratories I presume that we are in agreement that on the Beginning level the laboratory work is perhaps best suited to drill patterns, intonation, and pronunciation. It is also generally accepted now that the laboratory is not at the core of the audio-lingual method but is rather a patient drillmaster and helper of the teacher. Perhaps then, we would also admit that at the beginning "one-shot affairs," such as the single playing of a poem, a speech, or a scene from a play is virtually meaningless for the student and should be avoided. Yet we must banish boredom from laboratory work. I have already spoken of the contents of the tapes, but, in addition, these should be of minimum length, whatever the preparation level of the student is. Ideally the tapes should not be over fifteen minutes, if there is a daily laboratory assignment. They should not exceed twenty-five minutes, if the student—as at present is often the case—has only two listening-responding opportunities per week. But where are these fifteen-minute or twenty-five minute tapes for instruction in German? For the teacher it is often very difficult to break down commercially supplied tapes into smaller and still meaningful components. We have tried to reduce the lengthy tapes which accompany the second year text by Lothar Kahn, *Intermediate Conversational German* (American Book Co., 1963), but we could not achieve satisfactory results.

All in all, currently one of the soundest text and tape combinations in Beginning German on the college level is F. Alan DuVal, Louise Miller DuVal, Klaus A. Mueller, and Herbert F. Wiese, *Moderne deutsche Sprachlehre* (Random House, 1967). Credit should also be given to Gerard F. Schmidt, who reached nearly the same heights in *Hör gut zu!* (Macmillan, 1964).

However, many colleagues are voicing the emphatic view that the future in beginning modern language teaching does not lie in the audio-lingual field at all, but in the realm of audio-visual. To this I can only say that pictures in foreign language teaching have been available since the printing of Comenius' *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* in the 17th century. But where are the truly satisfactory film strips, motion pictures on the level of *Je Parle Français* (Encyclopedia Britannica Films), or at least on the level of *Parlons Français* (Heath), in the Germanic field? I have not yet found anything on the first-year college level which would surpass Glenn E. Waas' experimental *Das deutsche Dorf* and I am using this film strip

and tape combination as supplementary material for the fourth consecutive year.[7]

II. *Intermediate College German.*

On the Beginning level, as I have stated, there are some carefully executed, pedagogically sound and modern materials available. Compared to it the Intermediate level is almost a desert. This is perhaps so, because our profession is even less unanimous about goals for the second year than it is for the first. How long into the second year should we continue with the oral-aural approach and at what point should we turn most of our attention to reading? No wonder that the textbook authors are confused by our uncertainties. As a starter, there are some obvious things we can do:

There is need to articulate the material: there is need to add a second year version to the *Moderne deutsche Sprachlehre* and to the other successful first year texts. Also, most American intermediate texts are written as if the German instruction would have to start anew in regard to phonological exercises, drills, and so on. Specifically, in regard to the available audio-lingual material, we must contend with the students' as well as our own ennui because of its monotony. As Virginia Cables aptly states:

> "What precisely is wrong to cause yawns both in the classroom and in the laboratory? The answer lies in the great sameness of most materials: the rhythm, the type of drill, the inadequate demands made upon the student. The sameness of most materials means that there is too much of the type of drill where all students have to do is repeat what they hear. True, this is needed in the beginning stages of learning, but they must progress beyond this type of response into an area where they must create their own responses, not leaning on the teacher, but working on their own."[8]

For example, the tapes to Harold von Hofe's *Im Wandel der Jahre* (Holt, 1964), contain many intricate questions to which the answers recorded on the same tape are the only acceptable ones. It has been observed that after a while many students give up answering and simply wait for the utterance of the proper solution emanating from the tape. Other authors of second year tape-connected texts make the lessons so interlocking and comprehensive that unimaginative teachers feel compelled to pursue the

[7] Three tapes of elementary, intermediate and advanced difficulty with a single accompanying 24-frame filmstrip can be borrowed from the NCSA-AATG Service Center. See also E. Reichmann's review in *GQ*, XXXVI (January 1963), p. 87.

[8] "The Language Laboratory, Boon or Bane?" *French Review*, XXXIX (February 1966), p. 619.

false goal of "finishing the book" without having injected substantial reading of literature and writing, in the form of *Nacherzählungen*, within the two semesters. However, my main criticism of most of the second year audio-lingual texts is that, in addition to being thick and comprehensive, they are culturally undernourished. I consider Walter E. Glaettli and R. Elwood Backenstoss, *German Conversational Review Grammar* (American Book Co., 1966), one of the better recent texts.

In Intermediate German there should be room to enlarge the students' listening comprehension and speaking knowledge, on the one hand, and reading as well as writing ability, on the other. The reading material should be carefully selected according to the students' progress in learning the language and it should be literature. Perhaps I am a purist but I find the mutilation of stories by Hesse, Kafka, and other major authors in Valentine C. Hubbs and Robert L. Kyes, *German in Review* (Macmillan, 1966), a crime against humanism. There seems to be something singularly inelegant about using snippets from masterpieces primarily for grammatical analysis. I would settle the question of books for the second year by recommending a thin but culturally stimulating audio-lingual text which, under reasonable conditions, can be completed within the first semester. This would be accompanied in the first semester by a reader with complete pieces of literature of increasing difficulty. A truly outstanding reader, which is well-organized and has fine selections, is by Peter Heller and Edith Ehrlich, *German Fiction and Poetry* (Macmillan, 1967). In the second semester I would continue with individual readers of increasing difficulty. I would give preference to those for which records, tapes or films are available. But where are these aids to supplement our work in the second year?

In this connection Sidonie Cassirer and Werner Hollmann, have done real pioneering work with their tape programs for initial literature courses.[9] Unfortunately, these tapes are not yet available to the general public. Prepared by Henry Regensteiner, Dürrenmatt's *Drei Hörspiele* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1965), with tapes are, however, available and this material is quite suitable for the second semester. There are, of course, films and tapes, which were not prepared by educators but which are nevertheless available from the German consulates and from commercial sources on a loan basis. Some of these can be used profitably from time to time; however, it is not recommended that they be used as steady fare. Technically many of these aids are not satisfactory, and the time limitations placed on their availability diminish their educational value. Perhaps the most useful items in this group are the *Deutschlandspiegel* films. Because of the exceedingly helpful and prompt service of the Ger-

[9] "The Teaching of Literature and the Language Gap: Tape Programs for Initial Courses, I," *GQ*, XL (March 1967), pp. 234–252.

man Consulate at Cleveland, Heidelberg College receives these films when they are still timely. These newsreels widen the students' cultural horizon by depicting exhibits, architecture, political figures and events, and also sports. Each film is accompanied by a script and thus some advance preparation of the students in regard to lexical items is feasible. The German consulates, upon request, can also furnish tapes with scripts and films on customs, travel, etc. A stirring record, which is also technically quite superior, and which is always appreciated by my second year students, is *Kennedy in Deutschland* (9202A, Grammophon) which includes the voices of not only Kennedy but also Adenauer, Lübke, Brandt and others. From time to time I like to end up the second year by reading Thomas Mann's *Tonio Kröger*. A special treat for the students, after they have finished reading the first chapter, is to listen to the author's own delightfully interpretive reading of the same (TC 1004, Caedmon).

We are lacking a satisfactory audio-lingual text which could be used for the entire second year in German. Personally, I have developed doubts that we need one. The second semester, which is terminal for most of our students, should primarily be devoted to reading, whereas the first semester would still be primarily devoted to the audio-lingual study of the language. Considering all this, and until satisfactory tapes, such as the ones prepared by Cassirer and Hollmann, are commercially available, I would recommend dispensing with the regular and required attendance of the laboratory in the second semester. For the end of the first semester in Intermediate German we should set achieveable goals in pronunciation, intonation, and grammatical structure as it relates to laboratory work. All students should be tested on these, and only those who fall short would have to continue with their laboratory work into the second semester, until their deficiencies are removed. Once again, we must define our goals and prepare corresponding tests of achievement.

III. *Advanced Level in College German.*

Unless we are considering such classes as German Phonetics or Advanced Conversation, there seems to be no present need for laboratory work on a regular basis beyond the Intermediate level. There are excellent phonograph records available for supplementing the literature classes. Among others, the Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft's recordings of *Faust I* and *II*, *Nathan der Weise*, etc. are well-known. Perhaps not so well-known is an outstanding recording of *Maria Stuart* by the ensemble of the Viennese "Burgtheater" (FRL 1554, Period). What we especially need now are short films of outstanding tonal quality of recitations in German by the living poets themselves and by artists. The sound alone gives us an inadequate picture of a poem or a climactic scene in a play. In our German Drama and German Poetry classes we need to see

the gestures and the facial expressions as well. Consideration would have to be given to whether the students would benefit more from individual or group activity. Group listening to either a record or a tape may be preferable to individual work if the material is of special difficulty, and where a follow-up discussion on either linguistic difficulties or on interpretation seems necessary. An electronic classroom, as described below, would seem to be an ideal setting for listening to tapes by small classes studying literature.

IV. *The Electronic Classroom.*

Professionals commenting on modern language teaching bemoan the fact that the present laboratories work as separate entities and, consequently, many teachers are not overly concerned with what takes place there. Their primary interest is in the selection of the text but they neglect to check the tapes. In the rush of activities which prevail at the beginning of an academic year, it is not uncommon to observe some colleagues who would hand the unopened packages of tapes to the laboratory personnel. Where is the concern here for the quality of the tapes and the length for the individual lessons on the tapes? Of course this picture is somewhat exaggerated, but it illustrates the lack of really integrating the taped material into the instruction. As for the future, much seems to be pointing in the direction of a gradual disappearance of the present laboratories and of an increase in individual library-type practice stations. This period of transition appears to be the proper time to train the faculty members in integrating the taped material into their instruction. As the old "lock-step" type laboratories are wearing out, while at the same time the student population is on the increase, this is also the time for adding supplementary laboratory facilities. On both accounts the electronic classroom may offer a pedagogically sound and a financially reasonable interim solution.

The electronic classroom I have in mind for college use would consist of twelve completely closed-in soundproof booths for a maximum of twenty-four beginning students. The tapes, by necessity, would not exceed twenty-five minutes in length. The class of twenty-four would be divided into groups A and B. Group A would listen and respond to the tape while Group B is being drilled and prepared by the instructor for its next laboratory work. Group B would be the first one to move into the booths on the succeeding laboratory practice session while Group A is being drilled and prepared for its next one, and so forth. It is now a fairly common practice that first year students have two full hours of practice in the laboratory per week, in addition to the three to five hours for credit in the classroom. My proposal would limit the laboratory work to two half-hours per week and thus save the average student one hour of required attendance. The teacher, of course, should prescribe additional in-

dividual tape listening and responding experiences for those who are in need of it. According to this plan, the teacher would have to dovetail the laboratory activity with the classroom instruction to a much greater extent and in a more efficient way than it is done today. He would *have to be* concerned about the quality of the tapes, their length, and how they contribute to the learning process. He may finally recognize the tape as an ally and entrust a part of his duties ". . . to the tireless and consistent voice of a machine."[10] The electronic classroom would be used primarily by first year students. It could easily accommodate eight sections per day, a total of 192 students per day, providing that the number of booths is limited to twelve. Third semester German students may also profit from the booths, as well as students of German literature. Since we would be dealing with a college-age group, engaged in meaningful and short laboratory work, I do not foresee disciplinary difficulties.

An additional favorable feature of the electronic classroom would be, especially as far as less wealthy institutions are concerned, the inexpensiveness of the setup. The booths could be constructed in a horseshoe fashion around the sides and the back of the room by campus maintenance personnel, leaving the front and center of the room free for regular classroom activity. An ordinary tape recorder of good quality would broadcast the single program through a transmitter to the twelve booths. The sole equipment in the latter would be an audio-active headset with a microphone. The current estimated cost of this laboratory, without the play-back feature at the individual stations, which I consider non-essential, is $2,200. This also includes installation but not the cost of the booths. Because of the simplicity of the setup, the cost of maintenance would be at a minimum. Likewise, the operation of the laboratory should cause no difficulty. Instructors with butterfingers could entrust the starting and rewinding of the tape to one of their students.

Conclusion.

Much has been written for and against laboratories. The inescapable fact remains that in some form or another the machinery is here to stay and that modern foreign language teachers must learn to live with it. In this age of mass education, in which personal contact with the individual student is becoming more and more difficult, the machine and the carefully preselected program can be of great assistance to the teacher. There seems to be a dangerous and widening gap between technological developments and suitable educational material. Computer assisted instruction

[10] Elton Hocking, *Language Laboratory and Language Learning*, Department of Audio-visual Instruction, NEA Monograph No. 2 (Washington: National Education Association, 1964), p. 36.

in learning to read a foreign language as well as intricate teaching machines with audio-visual characteristics are well within the realm of possibility,[11] yet we do not have a truly satisfactory audio-lingual text for the Intermediate level. There is need to develop sounder tapes, audio-visual material of all sorts, and better tests which can measure the achievement of the student learning with these aids.

There is need to rethink our goals on each level. I advocate three semesters of intensive audio-lingual training because I am in agreement with Jack M. Stein that ". . . the study of literature is most advantageously preceded by audio-lingual study of the language, and conversely the audio-lingual study can properly lead to the study of literature at a relatively early stage."[12] What are your goals? What do you recommend?

Heidelberg College

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[11] M. Keith Myers and John B. Gilpin, "PLATO: The Teacher's Mentor," report to MLA Conference 39: Audio-Visual Materials and Teacher Training (December 1967), 6 pp. (on stencil).

[12] "Language Teaching and Literature," *GQ*, XXXVIII (September 1965), p. 436.